

# Teooriast praktikani

## Dynamics of theory and practice

SISEARHITEKTUURI  
AJAKIRI

THE JOURNAL OF  
INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE

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TOM CALLEBAUT

# Spirituaalne ruum vaimsuse otsingutes

VISUALESSEED

TOM CALLEBAUT

# Sacred Spaces as a Medium for Connecting People in their Search for Spirituality

VISUAL ESSAYS

## MUUTUV ÜHISKOND

Kirikuskäijate arvu vähenemine ja mahajäetud kloostrid on väljakutseks paljudele Flandria poliitikutele.<sup>1</sup> Samal ajal on täheldatav kasvav vajadus uuteks spirituaalseteks lähenemisteks. Sekularisatsioon on paljuskü pigem sotsiaalsete muutuste kui hääbumise tulemus.<sup>2</sup> Erinevatele võimalustele on pööratud vähe tähelepanu ning see on toimunud muutusi võimendanud.

## KOHALIK IDENTITEET

Meil on praegu spirituaalses mõttes väga huvitav aeg, mil korraga elavad koos eri põlvkonnad: usklikud 80aastased, köhklevad 60aastased, tüdinud 40aastased ja üllatanud 20aastased. Meid ümbritsev sotsiaalne keskkond on segu paljudest (usunditest ja) kultuuridest. Selline mitmekesisus soodustab erisuguseid kohalikke algatusi.

## KIVI JÕES

Brügge Püha Magdaleena Kiriku rekonstrueerimine YOT-projekti raames (*Yot-project in de Helige Magdalenakerk, Brugge*) 2002. aastal oli esimene omalaadne projekt Flandrias (autorid: Tom Callebaut ja Stefaan Onraet). YOT-projekti<sup>3</sup> näol oli tegemist inimliku, ruumilise ja vaimse eksperimendiga, mis avas kiriku rohkematele võimalikele kasutajagruppidele ning tegevustele. See andis tõuke meie tulevase religioosse pärandi moodustamisele ja vaimse vabaduse otsingutele. Ühtlasi on YOT ka näidisprojekt. Alates YOT-projektist on Tom Callebaut olnud seotud üle kolmekümne spirituaalseid ruume käsitleva uurimis- ja kujundusprojektiga.

## TRILOOG INIMESE, RUUMI JA SPIRITUAALSUSE VAHEL

„tcct“ büroo projektid lähenevad spirituaalsete ruumide transformatsioonile alati laiemalt, võttes aluseks sotsiaalsed ja lokaalsed muutused ning eripärad. Klient (tellija, kasutajad) on alati oodatud osalema kogu ühiskonda, ruumi ning spirituaalsust käsitlevas muutuste protsessis.<sup>4</sup> Tulemused vastavad rohkem erinevatele ootustele, kui need kolm osapoolt toetavad üksteist, selle asemel et – mis enamasti kipub juhtuma – kogu protsessi pidurdada.

## ÜLLATAV PÖÖRE

Kümme aastat tagasi olid paljud veendunud, et spirituaalsus ja vaimsed huvid on taandumas ning hääbuvad lõpuks üldse.

Praegune kahekümneaastaste põlvkond ei pruugi olla teadlik Flandria sajandivanustest religioossetest traditsioonidest, kuid nad on üllatavalt avatud ning lisaks huvitatud ka enda spirituaalsusest. Alguses oli „tcct“ ülesandeks pigem taaselustada olemasolevat religioosset pärandit: ümber organiseerida, genereerida lisaväärtusi (ja eesmäärke), ümber jaotada, tagada laienemine. Täna tegeleb „tcct“ ka uute pühakodade kavandamisega, mille järele on tekkinud kasvav nõudlus.<sup>5</sup>

## KÜSIMUSED JA VASTUSED

Käesolev artikkel tutvustab disaini arengut viimase 12 aasta jooksul ning ruumiliste lahenduste mitmekesisust. Iga projekt on välja töötatud täiesti erinevatel alustel ja erinevas kontekstis; erinev eesmärk, erinev lähteülesanne, erinevad finantsilised vahendid, erinev meeskond, erinev geograafiline asukoht, erinev sotsiaalne võrgustik, erinev ajalooline tähendus – iga

## A SOCIETY IN MOTION

The decrease in the number of churchgoers and deserted monasteries pose challenges for many policymakers in Flanders<sup>1</sup>. At the same time, there is a growing need for new spiritual approaches. Secularisation is much more a story of social change rather than of fading<sup>2</sup>. Little attention has been paid to the opportunities multiplied by these changes.

## LOCAL IDENTITY

Nowadays we live in a fascinating era of spirituality. Different generations live together: the religious 80-year old, the for-and-against 60-year old, the annoyed 40-year old and the astonished 20-year old. At the same time, we live in a social blend of different (religious) cultures. Based on this diversity, various local and spiritual initiatives are growing.

## STONE IN THE RIVER

The YOT reorientation of the neo-gothic Magdalena Church in Bruges was a Flanders pilot project in 2002. (design: Tom Callebaut and Stefaan Onraet). YOT<sup>3</sup> has been a human, spatial and spiritual experiment, opening the church to more target groups and more different activities. It has triggered reflection on the future of our religious patrimony and the search for spiritual freedom. In the meantime, YOT has become a reference work. Since YOT, Tom Callebaut has been involved in thirty or so research and design projects of sacred spaces.

## MAN, SPACE AND SPIRITUALITY IN TRIALOGUE

'tcct' always fits the transformation of a sacred space within a broader context of social and local changes. Customers are always invited to engage completely in the whole process of changing man-form-spirituality<sup>4</sup>. Better results are achieved when those three dynamics reinforce each other instead of blocking the process, as often happens.

## A SURPRISING TURN

Ten years ago, many were convinced that spiritual interest would only fade and finally peter out.

The youngest generation in its twenties may not be well informed about the centuries old religious tradition of Flanders but they surprisingly do have an open mind and attach great interest to the spiritual dimension of their life. At first, 'tcct' was assigned especially to re-activate the existing religious patrimony: reorientation, additional purposes, reallocation, and recently an expansion. Today, 'tcct' is faced with an ever growing demand for designing new sacred spaces<sup>5</sup>.

## A TIME PERIOD OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

This article introduces the reader to the evolution of design questions and the diversity of spatial answers of the past twelve years. Each project has been developed in a totally different context: another trigger, other financial means, another team, another basis, another geographic location, another social network, another historical meaning... Every project has its own story and value. A horizontal line divides the paper, with projects originating from the existing religious patrimony above the line, and projects created

1 Judith De Waele, *From secularization to disclosure* (Free University of Brussels, 2013–2014), 11.

2 Patrick Loobuyck, *The secular society, about religion, atheism and democracy* (Houtekiet, 2013), 23–25.

3 Gerard Rik, *Madeleine, Madeleine* (Halewijn, 2002).

4 Sofie Verscheure and Tom Callebaut, *A future for churches, a monastery in the city* (Yotb vzw, 2012).

5 Judith De Waele, "Keep the church in the middle" *Retko Verso*, December 2014 – January 2015: 46–49.

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projektil on oma lugu ja väärtus. Ettekande stend on jagatud rõhthalt kaheks, kus ülevaalt pool joont on toodud projektid, mis käsitlevad olemasolevat religioosset pärandit, ning allpool joont on projektid, mis on loodud täiesti uues kontekstis. Liikudes vasakult paremale on projektid reastatud kronoloogilises järjekorras. Mida põhjalikum on projekti esitus, seda kaalukam on selle osa uurimistöös. Hallist ekraanist allpool olevaid projekte pole teostatud.

Projektid on arenenud religioossetest spirituaalsemateks, luues veelgi heldemaid ruume, vastuste ruumidest otsingute ruumideks, vastandumiselt ja eristumiselt rohkem integreeritud ja avatud ruumideks.

## LOOMINGUL PÕHINEV TEADUSLIK UURIMISTÖÖ

2013. aastal alustas Tom Callebaut doktoritöö „Spirituaalne ruum vaimsuse otsingutes“ (*Sacred space as connecting medium for people in search of their spirituality*) kirjutamist Leuveni Ülikoolis (*University of Leuven*, juhendajad Johan Verbeke ja Joris Geldhof). Huvi (tuleviku) uute spirituaalsete ruumide vastu pani aluse tema uurimusele ja loominguale. Antud uurimuses vaadeldakse arhitektuuri kui vahendit pakkumaks inimestele võimalust luua oma spirituaalne nägemus ja kogemus. Töös hinnatakse ruumikujundamise protsessi käigus saadud kogemuste ja mõistmise vahelist seost ning käsitletakse põhjalikult nii tööprotsessi (uue spirituaalse ruumi teostus) kui ka projekti (millised on selle uue spirituaalse ruumi omadused).

## SISEARHITEKTUUR KUI VAHEND AVASTAMISEKS

Spirituaalse ruumi tellija omab harva kindlat nägemust – ta tunneb vajadust teistsuguse ruumi järele, aga mida teha, kes seda külastaksid, kui kaua kogu protsess aega võtaks – seda on sageli raske hinnata. Sellepärast rakendabki „tctt“

enda väljatöötatud uurimismeetodeid projekteerimisprotsessi alguses.

Kõikvõimalike huvigruppide esindajad kutsutakse kokku ühe laua taha, et koostada uus valdkondadevaheline nägemus. Töö käigus kaalutakse igasuguseid võimalusi ja võimalikke lahendusi, et käsitleda spetsiifilist lähteülesannet erinevatest vaatenurkadest. Tellijal tekib lõpuks oma nägemus ning ta on võimeline sõnastama oma visiooni ja lähteülesande väljendamaks oma ootusi ruumi loomisel. Selle protsessi jooksul arvestatakse kõigi võimalike arengutega (ruum-inimene-ruum-spirituaalsus). Terav probleem ning selle selge esitus on aluseks heale projektile.

## SISEARHITEKTUUR KUI VAHEND ARENGUKS

Eespool kirjeldatud uuring lõpeb konkreetse ja kõigile vastuvõetava visiooniga, tugeva meeskonna moodustamisega ning mitmesuguste arhitektuuriliste küsimuste püstitamisega. Sellest hetkest alates keskendub „tctt“ lähteülesande ruumilistele aspektidele. Enamasti oleme selleks hetkeks välja töötanud ka oma ruuminägemuse. Spirituaalne ruum on muutunud vastuste ruumist küsimuste küsimise ruumiks.<sup>6</sup> See on koht, kus inimestele antakse võimalus arendada individuaalselt või kollektiivselt oma spirituaalset identiteeti. Spirituaalse ruumi loomisel kasutatakse üldjoontes samu arhitektuurseid vahendeid, mis on kättesaadavad mis tahes funktsiooniga ruumi loomisel – valgus, proportsioonid, materjalid, aeg – neile lihtsalt lähenetakse pisut teisiti. Eesmärgi ja mugavuse ning funktsiooni ja tähenduse vaheline sünergia on olulisem. Mugavustunne on see, mis pakub kasutajale rahu ja turvalisust ning mis on vajalik hapruse ja autentsuse loomiseks. Muutused hoiavad kasutaja erksana ja teotahelisena. Ruum esitab kasutajale väljakutseid või tuletab talle

<sup>6</sup> Alain de Botton, *Religion for atheist* (Atlas, 2011), 241-269.

in a totally new context below. From left to right, the projects are arranged according their evolution in time. The larger the presentation of the project, the more influence it has had on research. Projects below the grey screen have never been executed.

Projects are evolving from religious through spiritual to more generous spaces, from spaces of answers to spaces of quest, and from contrasting and separate spaces to more integrated and open spaces.

## RESEARCH BY DESIGN

In 2013, Tom Callebaut started doctoral research entitled *Sacred Space as a Connecting Medium for People in Search of their Spirituality* at the University Of Leuven (KUL – Supervisors Johan Verbeke and Joris Geldhof). His curiosity concerning possible new kinds of future sacred spaces has triggered this research by design. In this research, architecture is seen as a medium for providing people with the chance to develop their vision and experience of spirituality. This study is a continuous interaction between experiences gained during design practice and insights acquired from research. Process – how does a new sacred space come into being – as well as project – what kind of features does such a new sacred space have – are put under the microscope.

## INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE AS A MEDIUM TO DISCOVER

The customer of a sacred space design hardly has a programme at the beginning: he feels the need for a different kind of space, but what to do, who will visit, inspire, how long it will take...is often difficult to estimate. That is why 'tctt' uses research by design that it has developed itself before starting the design process.

Representatives of all possible parties are gathered together to trans-disciplinarily develop their own new vision. Therefore different (im)possible design plans are considered in order to approach the specific assignment based on various points of view. The customer gradually

becomes aware of his wishes, is able to express his vision and basic conditions, and learns how to communicate his design requirements. During this process, all dynamics (man-form-spirituality) of the project are taken into account. A challenging and clear presentation of the question is essential to develop a good project.

## INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE AS A MEDIUM TO DEVELOP

This preliminary inquiry results in a sharp and supported vision, a strong team and various architectural questions. From this moment onward, 'tctt' starts to concentrate again on the space aspect of the assignment. Even here, its own design vision has been developed. The sacred space has evolved from a space of answers into a space of quests<sup>6</sup>. A place where people are given the chance to develop their spiritual identity individually or within a group. To create a sacred space, the designer essentially has the same architectural means at his disposal as for any other space: light, proportion, materials, time...but these are used in another way. The tension between comfort and challenge, between function and meaning is more important. Comfort offers the customer rest and safety, and is necessary to allow fragility and authenticity. Challenge keeps the customer alert and in motion. Space questions him or helps to remind him of what is essential<sup>7</sup>. The combination between comfort and challenge results in different possible interpretations of the space<sup>8</sup>. Because society changes rapidly in quest, our spatial interventions have to be temporary as well as easily adaptable. It offers the freedom to make pronounced and daring interventions.

<sup>6</sup> Alain de Botton, *Religion for atheist* (Atlas, 2011), 241-269.

<sup>7</sup> Sylvain De Bleckere and Roel De Ridder, *The open church* (Pelekman, 2014), 81.

<sup>8</sup> T. Coomans, H. De Dijn ja De Maeyer, ed. *Loci sacri, understanding sacred places* (Leuven University Press, 2012), 50.

meelde, mis on oluline.<sup>7</sup> Mugavuse ja eesmärgi vaheline kombinatsioon pakub mitut erinevat võimalust ruumi interpreteerimiseks.<sup>8</sup> Kiiresti muutuva ühiskonna nõudlusest tulenevalt peavad meie ruumilised lahendused olema ajutised ja kergesti kohandatavad. Nii tekib võimalus märkimisväärsitele ja julgetele sekkumistele.

Spirituaalne ruum kui eraldiseisev, suletud ning paljude kontrastidega ruum, mida on võimalik külastada igal ajal, on rohkem, kui me tänapäeval vajame. Lisaks on vaja luua püsiv spirituaalne kontekst, mis hõlmaks hoonet ümbritsevat ala ning mida oleks võimalik külastada igal ajal, kui on kogetud midagi, mis on väljaspool tavapärase mõistmise ja taju piire. Pärast mitmeid intervjuusid munkade ja nunnadega oleme jõudnud äratundmisele, et ilu peitub nii igapäevases elus kui ka elu salapärasuses – ja see ongi elu ime!

<sup>7</sup> Sylvain De Bleekere and Rael De Ridder, *The open church* (Pelckmans, 2014), 81.

<sup>8</sup> T. Coomans, H. De Dijn ja De Maeyer, ed., *Loci sacri, understanding sacred places* (Leuven University Press, 2012), 50.

Sacred space, as a separate, closed place of contrast that you can visit whenever you like, is what we need more of nowadays. There is also the need for a permanent spiritual layer present throughout an entire site that you can visit whenever overwhelmed by something beyond your understanding. Based on many interviews with monks and sisters, we have come to learn that beauty can be found in daily life as well as in life's mystery: the generosity of life!



OLD CONTEXT

NEW CONTEXT

AN EVOLUTION IN TIME AND SPACE

"The sacred is in the profane. It stands out but it belongs to the same universe as its other dimension".

– Dupré Louis

2002



church reorientation

2002 200 2006

2007



social- cultural additional purposes

SPIRITUAALNE RUUM VAIMSUSE OTSINGUTE VAHENDAJANA

a pilotproject triggers  
the social debate on the  
decrease of churchgoers in  
Flanders

1 Magdalenakerk, Brugge

3

multi-religious  
hospital chapel

new concept religion classroom



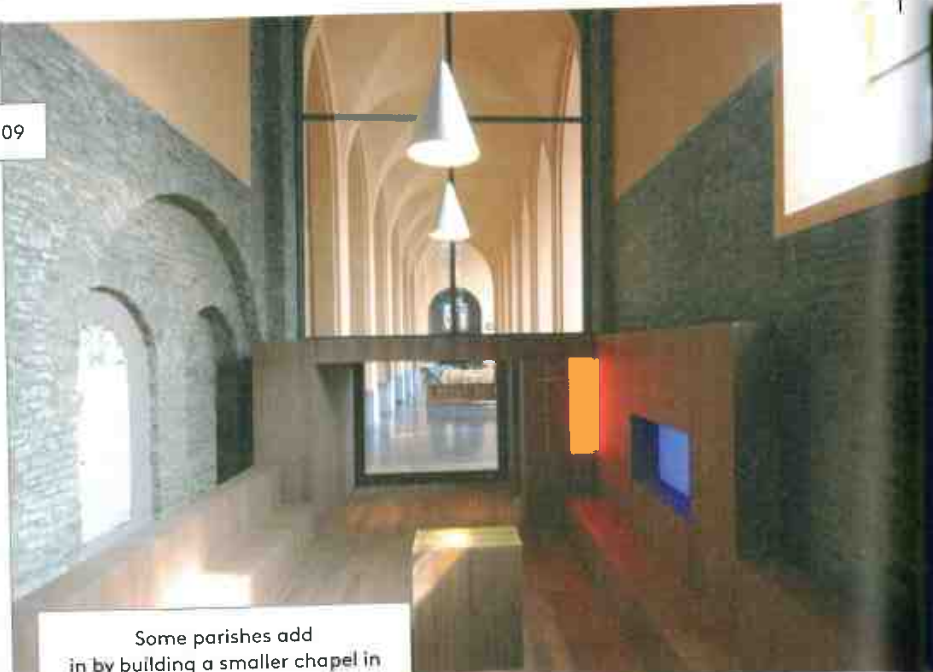
new concept religion classroom

- 2 Machariuskerk, Gent
- 3 Sint-Elisabeth hospital, Antwerpen
- 4 Multifunctional religion classroom Izegem
- 5 Jan Ypermanhospital, Ieper



2004 2009

Magdalenakerk, Brugge



Some parishes add  
in by building a smaller chapel in  
the existing large church building

new weekly chapel in  
historical church



Rising Omphaloschapel

11



new school chapel

2010



competition school at  
monastic site

a bottom-up design research of  
repurposing convents in an urban  
context

8



new monastery chapel

7



design research of monastery reallocation

- 6 Sint-Pieterskerk, Torhout
- 7 Karmelietenmonastery, Brugge
- 8 OLV Bethanië, Loppem
- 9 Sint-Lucas, Gent
- 10 Omphaloschapel, rising pavilion
- 11 Emmaüsinstituut, Aalter

2011



new chapel in old chapel

finding a contemporary way  
to experience spirituality: from  
answering space to searching  
space

the design process as vehicle to  
merge four parishes into one  
community

12



fusion of four parishes

"We all live in the gutter, but some of us are  
looking at the stars."  
– Oscar Wilde

14



new hospital chapel

a transforming experiment on the  
border between private-public and  
profane-sacred

15



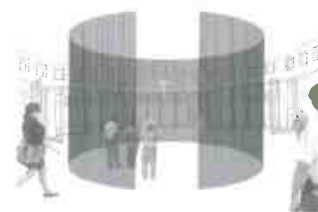
Sacred space in front yard

- 12 Sint-Niklaaskerk, Willebroek
- 13 Chapel of the efflorescence, Groot-Bijgaarden
- 14 Chapel for the unsolvable, Roeselare
- 15 Passers-by pavilion, Brugge

2012

social reallocation of  
monastery

16

social- cultural additional  
purposes

18

17



reallocation chapel into study hall

19



new school chapel

Updating the catholic identity of  
institutes of education and care

the need of new sacred spaces  
in a new context such as  
festivals, companies

21

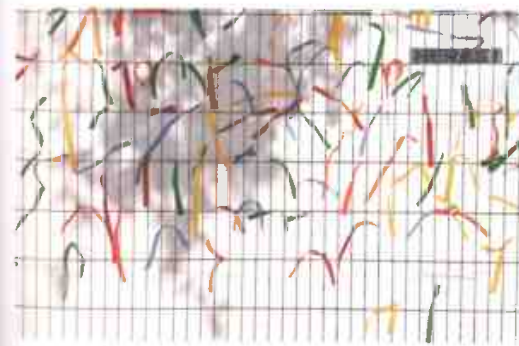
silent space for  
administration center

22



spiritual experiment

20



memorial space for festival

- 16 vzw Binnenstad, Brugge
- 17 Leiepoort, Deinze
- 18 Triniteitskerk, Terneuzen
- 19 Blauwe zone, Brugge
- 20 Pavilion Pukkelpop, Kiewit
- 21 Arkorum, Roeselare
- 22 Tobit bvo, Kortrijk



2013



reallocation monastery  
into a home

Top-down vision development of  
additional purposes in historical  
churches in a urban context

"Everything you can imagine, is real."  
- Pablo Picasso

24



vision development reallocation  
historical churches

25



spiritual meeting space school

26



social-cultural additional purposes:  
urban development

- 23 house VM, Ardoie
- 24 Sint-Janscollege, Sint-Amansberg
- 25 Sint-Pauluskerk, Deinze - Petegem

the need of new sacred spaces  
in a z context such as  
festivals, companies

2014

Repurposing a former convent site  
in a rural context into a new "zone  
of sense"

27



reallocation monastic site

28



New chapel psychiatric center

"You can find inspiration in everything.  
If you can't, look again."  
- Paul Smith



Developing a spiritual  
dimension in a home

30



line of furniture as a tribute to  
the little things of life

29



spiritual dimension inside a home

- 26 Ter Loo, Loppem
- 27 Sint-Janskerk, Mechelen
- 28 PC Sint-Amedeus, Mottel
- 29 House MV, Gentbrugge
- 30 Naked layer collection